

LEPIDOPTERA OBSERVED ON THE ISLES OF SCILLY IN 1989.

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RECORDS of lepidoptera from the Isles of Scilly up to about 1980 were collated by Agassiz (1981). In 1987 I published a list of certain species I had found in May 1986 (Heckford, 1987). Although no doubt other entomologists have visited the area in the last decade I do not know of any additions to those lists.

A further opportunity to investigate the lepidoptera occurred between 19th August and 1st September 1989 when I enjoyed a family holiday on St Mary's. The garden of the house where we stayed was very small and dominated by a narrow leaved willow which was covered in honeydew for the whole of our stay. This attracted several *Vanessa atalanta* (Linnaeus) and *Pararge aegeria* (Linnaeus) during the day and at night quite a number of macrolepidoptera including *Mythimna l-album* (Linnaeus) and *M. unipuncta* (Linnaeus).

I noted seven species of microlepidoptera not included in Agassiz's list and three macrolepidoptera of which there are few Scillonian records. These and some other species are listed at the end of this paper. An asterisk denotes a species not previously recorded from the islands as far as I am aware. The words in brackets are comments from Agassiz's list.

Also on 20th August I found two larvae and considerable evidence of feeding in seedheads of *Jasione montana* on a wall in Hugh Town, St. Mary's. The larvae appeared to agree with the description of *Cochylis pallidana* Zeller, which would be a new record. Unfortunately I failed to rear them and so cannot confirm my tentative identification.

Selected species

**Psychoides filicivora* (Meyrick): Porth Minnick. St Mary's, several larvae on *Asplenium marinum* 29.viii, moths bred; Higher Town Bay, St Martin's several larvae on *A. marinum* 31.viii, moths bred.

**Tinea dubiella* Stainton: Hugh Town, St Mary's, one adult 19. viii, confirmed by dissection.

Oinophila v-flava (Haworth): Old Town, St Mary's. Larvae under dead bark of *Pittosporum crassifolium* 20.viii, moth bred. In May 1986 (Heckford, 1987) I found larvae in similar circumstances in the same area suggesting the species is bivoltine on Scilly.

**Bedellia somnulentella* (Zeller): Holy Vale, St Mary's. A few larvae one pupa and several empty mines on *Calystegia sepium* 24.viii; near Porthloo Beach, St Mary's a few larvae and several empty mines on *C. sepium* 26.viii.

Coleophora argentula (Stephens): near Porth Minnick, cases not uncommon on *Achillea millefolium* 24.viii. Not recorded from St Mary's by Agassiz.

Scrobipalpa obsoletella (Fischer von Röslerstamm): Porthcressa Beach, St Mary's one adult 24.viii; Porthcressa Beach a few larvae in stems of *Atriplex* sp. 1.ix; New Grimsby Harbour, Tresco, many larvae in stems of *Atriplex* sp. 1.ix. This species was omitted in error from Agassiz's list, Richardson & Mere (1958) having described it as common.

**Blastobasis lignea* Walsingham: Hugh Town, one adult at actinic light 27.viii.

**Blastodacna hellerella* (Duponchel): Bar Point, St Mary's, larvae in *Crataegus* berries 26.viii, moths bred.

**Cydia janthinana* (Duponchel): Pelistry Bay, St Mary's, larvae in *Crataegus* berries 26.viii, moth bred.

**Sitochroa palealis* ([Denis & Schiffermüller]): Porth Minnick, one larva on *Daucus carota* 24.viii and another on 29.viii, moth bred.

Emmelina monodactyla (Linnaeus): Gugh, several larvae on *Calystegia soldanella* 29.viii, moths bred. A foodplant not previously noted in the British Isles.

Xanthorhoe spadicearia ([Denis & Schiffermüller]): Hugh Town, three at actinic light 21.viii. (One, St Mary's, 30.v.74.)

Eupithecia phoeniceata (Rambur): Hugh Town, one at actinic light 19.viii. (One, Tresco 17.ix.74.)

Plusia festucae (Linnaeus): Hugh Town, one on *Buddleia* bloom 28.viii. Recorded as "Rare" by Agassiz but Richardson & Mere (1958) state "Rare Tresco, uncommon St Mary's."

References

- Agassiz, D.J.L., 1981. *A revised list of the Lepidoptera (moths and butterflies) of the Isles of Scilly*, 20pp., 1 map. Isles of Scilly Museum Association [Publication No. 14].
- Heckford, R.J., 1987. Lepidoptera recorded from the Isles of Scilly in May 1986. *Entomologist's Rec.J. Var.* 99: 268-270.
- Richardson, A & Mere, R.M., 1958. Some preliminary observations on the Lepidoptera of the Isles of Scilly with particular reference to Tresco. *Entomologist's Gaz.* 9: 115-147 2 pls.

Mate competition in *Noctua pronuba* (Lep.: Noctuidae) Large Yellow Underwing.

At dusk in July 1988, near Lewes in East Sussex, I saw a fairly worn *Noctua pronuba* fly towards a small hawthorn bush and settle on it about 1.5m from the ground. It began to run urgently among the twigs. About 30cm from where the moth had landed I then noticed a newly-emerged female *pronuba* together with a male in fresh condition which was attempting to mate with her. All its attempts were unsuccessful, apparently because it persistently approached at the wrong angle, facing in the same direction as the (compliant) female. Eventually the latecoming male found the female